



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

August 22, 1997

Mr. Lew Dodgion
Administrator,
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
333 W. Nye Lane
Carson City, NV 89710

Dear Mr. Dodgion: *Lew*

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with Alexis Strauss and me about perchlorate. I'm writing to confirm my understanding of our telephone conversation which took place on August 14, 1997, particularly in light of information that has become available in the few days since our conversation.

As I described in the phone call, perchlorate, a man-made salt that is a primarily a component of ammonium perchlorate rocket fuel, was discovered contaminating groundwater at several Superfund sites in California and subsequently in other water supplies affected by facilities related to rocket testing and manufacturing. Perchlorate was further discovered at low levels (5 to 9 parts per billion) in the Colorado River by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). Sampling by MWD traced the contamination to Lake Mead. The Southern Nevada Water Authority also discovered perchlorate at 11 ppb in their water system which uses Lake Mead as a primary source. On August 18, 1997, you announced Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sampling results that show perchlorate above 1,000 ppb entering the Las Vegas Wash near Henderson, Nevada. MWD recently released results that essentially confirm your findings.

In 1995, US EPA established a provisional reference dose for perchlorate in a range of 4 to 18 ppb based on studies of acute toxicity to humans. The State of California used this information as the basis for an 18 ppb Interim Action Level for perchlorate in drinking water. EPA is actively overseeing Air Force plans to conduct an additional toxicological study. In addition, we are reviewing treatment technologies such as reverse osmosis and anaerobic biological digestion.

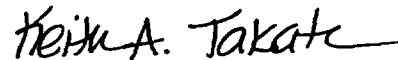
The recent discovery of perchlorate in the Colorado River and the water supplies of MWD and Southern Nevada Water Authority requires us to rapidly assess the potential sources of perchlorate to prevent ongoing contamination of this vital resource. Because the perchlorate threat impacts not only Nevada, but Arizona, California, and the tribes along the Colorado River, we feel that it is essential that Nevada DEP and EPA work together to address this problem.

Based on your work and the sampling performed by Southern Nevada Water Authority and MWD, our joint efforts will be directed at the Kerr-McGee facility and the former PEPCON site near Henderson. Nevada DEP and EPA will work closely together, coordinating our work and sharing all information. EPA will work to improve our knowledge of analytical, toxicological and treatment aspects of perchlorate since this information clearly has national importance.

Our overall perchlorate coordinator is Kevin Mayer. Based on the call, we understand that Doug Zimmerman is coordinating for DEP.

We very much appreciate inviting us to your press conference on August 18, 1997 during which you discussed the details of your plans with the public. We are confident that our agencies can successfully work together to address this unfortunate situation. I will contact you soon to begin the discussions. Please feel free to contact me at (415) 744-1730.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith A. Takata". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Keith A. Takata